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UNCLAS BOGOTA 003041

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR INL/LP

E.O 12358: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MASS](#) [PGOV](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: AIR BRIDGE DENIAL: FEBRUARY 2005 PROGRAM UPDATE

REF: A. 2003 STATE 265910

11. (U) Summary: Following is the February 2005 Air Bridge Denial (ABD) activity report required by ref A. There were 5167 tracks noted, of which 16 were declared Unidentified, Assumed Suspect (UAS) Tracks, with one Phase III event/Law Enforcement End Game where an aircraft was destroyed and 600 kilos of cocaine were impounded. End Summary.

ABD Tracks

12. (U) In February 2005, 5167 tracks were noted, of which 16 were declared UAS aircraft. This is the lowest monthly total since the program started, although the number of tracks is among the highest. The GOC did not react to five UAS. Two were located in weather covered areas, one was close to international borders, one was overwater, and one had old ROTHF information. Of the eleven they reacted to, one ended in a Phase III event/Law Enforcement End game and the tracker was unable to find the remaining ten.

Phase III Event

13. (SBU) On February 27, a Citation tracker was patrolling based on host nation information and picked up a track incoming from Venezuela. An A-37 was scrambled from Barranquilla. The target landed at Torcoroma, Cesar department, coordinates N0834/W07341. This is the same airfield as the Dec 15, 2004 event. The aircraft was loaded with cargo and took off westbound. The tracker followed and an A-37 joined on the chase. Phase I was accomplished and when the interceptor moved abeam of the UAS, the UAS turned eastbound. Phase Two was completed with no answer from the UAS. Phase three was completed with no answer from the UAS. After firing at the UAS, the interceptor reported fuel streaming from the aircraft, so it stopped firing. The UAS descended and started throwing white packages from the aircraft. It landed at Torcoroma, lost control during landing and crashed off the side of the runway. Three individuals left the aircraft. After a while several individuals came to the aircraft and started offloading packages. The A-37 completed Phase II warning shots and the individuals left the aircraft. Two Colombian Navy Helicopters, one of them a Gunship, deployed to the site. The gunship provided cover while the other offloaded five individuals who recovered several of the packages. They left to take the packages to a nearby town. The gunship stayed at the site and destroyed the aircraft before leaving the area to prevent the remaining drugs to be picked up by the traffickers. Army and Police ground forces eventually arrived and recovered more drug packages. Total cocaine impounded was 600 kilos.

Flight Operations

14. (SBU) In February, 2005, the Citations flew 327 hours in 114 sorties with an operational readiness of 99 percent. Of the 114 sorties, 72 were for GOC ABD intelligence gathering/patrols, ten were in P-3 support, four for E-3 support, 13 for ROTHF reactions, nine were for training, four for operational support, and two for reaction to GOC observations. One Citation was in Phase maintenance through the month and will remain there until late March. Another entered Phase maintenance at the end of March and will remain in Phase maintenance for 3 months.

15. (SBU) To date in 2005, there have been two Phase III events, two aircraft destroyed, one Phase I, two Law Enforcement End Games (One of the Phase IIIs and the Phase I), one arrest, one aircraft administratively impounded and 600 kilos of cocaine impounded.

16. (U) The next AB